

# **WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

## **Minutes June 17, 2014**

Members present: Linda Hanson, Robert Kennedy, Ruth Kurien, Connie Melo, Ellen Phillips, Donna Sterling, Phillip Walker  
Members absent: Ray Guenter, Ted Thomas  
Council Liaison: Shari Cantor  
Staff present: Kathleen Faroni, Susan Huleatt  
Guests: Mary Silverberg, Jonathan Slifka  
Volunteer Secretary: Amy Lynn Silverman

Phillip Walker chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

The Minutes of April 20, 2014 were approved unanimously.

### ***Chairman's Report***

Phil thanked Ray for standing in last month. He welcomed Mary Silverberg from the town's Disability Commission. The Senior Citizens' Commission was part of the Human Services booth at Celebrate West Hartford as was the Senior Job Bank. He noted that there should be advance planning next year for the Commission members to staff the booth. He and some of the Commission members attended both senior center events honoring their volunteers. Phil, Shari Cantor and Susan Huleatt have appeared on West Hartford Public Television recently to talk about the Senior Job Bank.

### ***Benefits Sheet***

No report.

### ***Transportation***

Susan Huleatt reported that planning is in progress for a Senior Transportation Forum to take place on September 16 from 1:30 to 3pm. Participating will be Dial-A-Ride, ADA Paratransit, Freedom Rides, ITN, Amride and the Senior Job Bank. There will be brief presentation and tables where attendees may gather information.

Ruth Kurien reported that the town has approved the budget ITN submitted and has released the funds to hire a part-time executive director. This budget will be presented also to the Rotary Club asking for release of promised funding.

It was suggested that a Bagel Breakfast on Transportation be planned at one or both senior centers for early September in advance of the Forum.

### ***Senior Job Bank***

Jim Doran emailed a brief written report stating that the SJB table at Celebrate West Hartford had a good number of visitors and that work is continuing on getting the name and mission better known in the community.

### ***Human Services Report***

Susan Huleatt thanked everyone for helping out at the booth. She noted that at Linda Hanson's suggestion information about library services is being added to the Benefit Sheet. Linda offered to contact someone at the library to come to a future meeting.

### ***Jonathan Slifka, Governor's Liaison to the Disability Community***

Mr. Slifka, who was introduced by Commission member Robert Kennedy, explained that his position was created to provide outreach and education and to help influence public policy for the disability community. The discussion covered such issues as transportation for seniors with disabilities, maintaining independence, housing especially with low income persons, persons with disabilities and seniors being “lumped” together. With regard to aging parents with special needs children who are also aging, Mr. Slifka is convening a working group to discuss the state’s waiting list for residential placement. He noted that 20+% of persons in the state are considered disabled and of that number 70+% are unemployed. There are some companies that are diligent in their efforts to employ individuals with disabilities. Sheltered workshops are not the answer since the wages are way below par. Mr. Slifka would like to see those closed.

### ***Town Council Report***

Shari Cantor reported that the boutique hotel has been approved for Blue Back Square. On Brace Road the building will be demolished and a new one built. The Masonic Temple has been purchased and will be developed to provide underground parking and 21 apartments as well as store fronts. There is discussion at the Zoning Commission about medical marijuana production and retail sites. Also MercyKnoll may be approved for market-rent apartments. The UConn property first right of refusal for purchase will not happen until 2017. The Town has ended the year with a surplus which comes from money given back from the school budget. The Council wants to ensure that there is a plan for the use of these funds. The Enterprise Fund in Human and Leisure Services which is supposed to be self-supporting has not been. The golf courses “eat up” a good portion of the fund. Investigation about the privatization of the skating rink is being conducted. Dial-A-Ride is running at a deficit because of rides given being over the contracted amount. While the annual fee has been raised, the Council is looking at other options to stem the deficit.

### ***Senior Center Reports***

Kathleen Faroni was very pleased with the time, spirit and energy all the volunteers have shown this year. The center is now fully staffed with a new part-time marketing person and a new part-time clerk. There have been 2 new part-time drivers added also. The concert series is off to a good start. The benefit Improv program honoring Sandee Kush was very well attended. The proceeds from the event will go toward a memorial garden. There were Mother and Father’s Days events. Conversation regarding inclusiveness has begun with a person from the LGBT community. A senior picnic is being planned for August at Winding Trails.

Gina Maroni asked Kathy to report that Party on the Patio will continue on some Wednesdays in July and August. The annual picnic supported by the West Hartford Police will be held at Town Hall on July 16.

### ***Old Business***

Robert Kennedy handed out a print-out from the Commission on Aging website. That print-out accompanies these Minutes.

### ***New Business***

None

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> at 10am.

The meeting adjourned at 11:26 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Lynn Silverman  
Volunteer Secretary